

ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO
THE DIRECTOR OF
PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD
WASHINGTON

October 13, 1952

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Sherman

From: Charles R. Norberg *CRN*

SUBJECT: Alleged Changes in the Communist Line as Raised by
MSA-ODMS.

Reference is made to the memorandum of conversation between the Admiral, George Morgan, Bissell, Wilson and Berger concerning the problems raised by possible changes in the Soviet-Communist line. Although the memorandum does not say specifically, it has apparently as its underlining premise, i.e., that the Soviet-Communist strategy now calls for tactics shifting from a hard, militant line to the softer, more cooperative approach as manifested in the technique of the popular front.

In answer to your request for my views, I conclude that:

1. The Office of Plans immediately begin on an urgent basis a consideration of the major problems concerning our psychological strategy on the assumption that there has been a major change in the Soviet-Communist strategy on a global basis;
2. I would not wait for three weeks for a return visit by the MSA-ODMS people but would call them in early next week and request that they outline their views concerning desirable U.S. psychological strategy in the event that this contingency of a major shift occurs.

I should like to emphasize at the beginning that I think it is imperative that contingency planning now take place, since for once we should try to be at least contemporary with a major Soviet move instead of constantly running behind the situation in order to catch up with it, e.g., the Stockholm Peace Appeal, the entire Communist peace movement, Communist BW charges, etc.

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As I have stated many times, it seems to me that the situation in Europe has been building up to a point where properly-timed Soviet action can certainly tend to weaken if not completely destroy the major defense efforts which this country is engaged in in Western Europe. Beginning immediately after the war, there has been no major change in the Soviet position in Europe, which has been one of complete exploitation of the Eastern European countries together with a major attempt to so orient the political, ideological, sociological and cultural elements that once the physical might of the USSR has been withdrawn from the area, the Eastern European countries will nevertheless remain in the Soviet-Communist bloc.

On the contrary, our whole defense activity in Western Europe is an action which we have undertaken de novo since the end of World War II and it has now begun to crystalize itself in a bulwark of men, arms and armament. Beginning in 1948 with the North Atlantic Treaty conversations and the signing of the Treaty in the spring of 1949, this effort was merely at the diplomatic and paper level. In the intervening three years, it has crystalized into a living system of defense, protecting Europe against possible Soviet aggression.

As this system of defense has arisen, it has of necessity imposed enormous burdens and severe strains upon the countries and the peoples of Western Europe. The standard of living has been lowered and we are every day hearing that the pinch of the rearmament effort has placed increasing burdens upon the economic structure of Western Europe. We do not seem to be able to achieve reasonable economic relations with Western Europe allowing increased trade with the United States to offset the loss of Eastern European markets. In consequence, as the cold war continues and the defense-rearmament effort increases in Western Europe, the temptation becomes greater to trade either legally or illegally with the countries of the Soviet bloc in order to improve the economic life of Western Europe.

Assuming a major change in Soviet tactics such as the softer line and the popular front, it is inevitable that suspicion of the Soviet-Communist bloc will lessen, the cement of fear which has been holding the Western defense effort together will begin to disintegrate and the NATO defense effort together with the European Defense Community might possibly become one of the first great historical alliances which proved successful, i.e., which achieved its objective of dissuading the Soviets from hugging Western Europe to their bosom.

This result would be dramatized to the world by a succession of major Soviet moves, cumulating the impact of a desire by the Soviet Union to live in peace and co-existence with the rest of the world, at least to exist side by side on a competitive basis with the capitalist system.

As you know, every item on the agenda for the Korean armistice negotiations has now been successfully resolved with the exception of one, the POW issue. The last statement of General Nam Il, upon our having indefinitely recessed the negotiations, was to the effect that the communists had accepted our version of bringing the POW's to a neutral position between the lines and then repatriating them. The issue seems to be unresolved, however, as to the method of repatriation. Here the initiative lies with the USSR who can dispose of the POW issue and the question of the Korean armistice negotiations by a single word of agreement.

In Europe, after several years of continuing negotiation, we have managed to arrive at agreement with the USSR with regard to an Austrian treaty with the exception of one or two items. The conclusion of the Austrian treaty would oblige the USSR to withdraw its occupation troops from Austria together with the line of communication troops which the USSR maintains in Hungary, Rumania and Eastern Czechoslovakia. Here again, the initiative for taking decisive action in the situation lies with the USSR.

Finally, with regard to Germany, while we do not have as clear a situation as that in Austria or Korea, it nevertheless is a distinct possibility that, upon ratification of the contractals (that is that the Soviets lose their fight against such ratification), the Soviets might well then execute a separate treaty with the East Zone German Government which will call for the evacuation of Soviet troops within one year and immediately accompany it with a token withdrawal of troops.

Thus, the optimum situation from the standpoint of the USSR is:

- (1) A declaration of peaceful intent, no war against the capitalist world and a demonstration of the soft line and the popular front;
- (2) The conclusion of an armistice with Korea, thus ending a war which has been dragging on for two years or more;
- (3) An Austrian treaty which will cause Soviet troops to be evacuated from Eastern Europe;
- (4) A separate treaty with the East Zone German Government, also accompanied by a token withdrawal of troops.

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The net result of all this would be:

- (a) the achieving of a great reduction in the rearmament effort of the West, particularly that sponsored by the U.S.;
- (b) a hoped for depression in the U. S. and the capitalist bloc as a result of a lessening of the armament drive;
- (c) increased trade by the Western countries with the Soviet bloc since the reason for export controls and sanctions will have disappeared;
- (d) increased division of countries of the capitalist bloc because of competitive free markets.

There are a good many other possible benefits to the USSR which would follow from such a course of conduct but they need not be gone into here. As an example, however, not the least of such psychological benefits would be the embarrassing position in which we would find ourselves since there would be great reluctance to bring American troops home from Western Europe and great reluctance to abandon or not use the far-flung network of air bases which we have been constructing on a global basis around the world. However, if the USSR not only stated that it was desirous of "peaceful co-existence", but accompanied these words with a series of major actions such as I have outlined above, it would be very difficult indeed to long substantiate a major defense effort such as we have been embarked upon.

Admittedly a great deal of this is perhaps wishful thinking, but nevertheless is a reasonable possibility based on the facts of the world situation. As such, therefore, it behooves the PSB to begin thinking very seriously and urgently concerning the psychological consequences of the impact of the decisions which have been made at the recently concluded Communist Party Congress in Moscow. I would hate to think that it would again take us from one to two years to come to the realization that something has happened here which has serious implication for the long-term future.